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October 24, 1966

Mr. Studs Terkel
WFMT
LaSalle-Wacker Bldg.
221 N. La Salle St.
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Terkel,

Back in June a young editor, then with The New American Library, on reading my book WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, encouraged me to write you. She thought I might be able to provide you with a fresh program that might be helpful to me. I didn't then for reasons I'll explain. Her name is Sally Belfrage. I presume you know her. She is aware of what I have done on radio and TV in New York, with the toughest kind of rehearsed opposition, whose presence was a surprise to me, and can probably give you an idea of what I can do. In your field, those who can tell you what I can do, entirely by phone, with no preparation, and for up to four hours are Joe Dolan, KNEW, Oakland (He got me out of bed five minutes before 2 a.m. our time and beginning at 2 a.m. I went for two hours); Jack Mckinney, KCAU (daytime speak to one of his producers, Miss Shirley Lekach, nighttime, if Jack is on the air, to another producer, Maury Levy), Phil Donahue (WHIO phoned me so close to air time that we were discussing his plans on the air for two minutes before we realized he was plugged in), John Sterling (WCBM radio, WJZ-TV, Baltimore), etc.

My book, WHITEWASH: THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, was the first on the subject. I think it is still the best and still the most complete. It suffered the curse of the first, perhaps also from its strength, and it could find no publisher. So, after more than a year of trying, going through more than 60 publishers in the US and a total of more than 100 internationally, I went further in hock, did it myself by offset, opened up the field and laid the basis of credibility for those who followed, and made a success of the most handicapped book there is. I'm sending you a copy by air and you will see its unusual format, etc. We are in the fifth edition (the first was a limited one), with about 15,000 copies sold and 22,500 "in print". The printer is still doing this on credit. He printed the first generally-circulated edition with nothing but a borrowed $500.00 down payment and the assurance of others I am the kind of a guy who would pay him. He shipped most of the wholesale orders for me, so when we had to go back to press and very little money had come in, he knew I had the sales to pay him and he proceeded. He is just finishing up the fourth printing, and I finished paying him for the second the day I ordered it. So, not everyone tried to suppress the book!

WHITEWASH alone is restricted to the official evidence of the Commission. With that is either destroys or places in such serious doubt that the effect is the same each of the major conclusions of the Report. You'll find when you see the book that everything of importance has the source indicated. All the people who should have them got their copies of the book with a letter asking them to find and report any error in it. Not one of these officials has had a single complaint. Their public statements have specifically avoided mention of my book. For example, former Assistant Counsel Wesley Liebeler on the west coast, now Professor of Law at the University of California.

More than three months ago he wrote me, saying he had "scanned" a copy and found some of the references to him rather less than complimentary (he understated). I sent him a copy of the book with every reference to him listed with a letter soliciting his comment. He has been silent - so silent that he hasn't even paid for the book! Last week, after Mark Lane declined to debate him he made cracks about Lane's book and Ep Epsteins. He did not mention WHITEWASH. He cannot.

I think you will find that both by content (I know the subject as few others do, for I alone did all my own work, save for Sauvage and Penn Jones) and and what I can do with it I can give you a lively show, either following you and your leads, fielding questions by phone, or a combination of both. I think that if you doubt this, those I have mentioned plus Paul Noble, a producer, or Mel Baily, program director of WNEW-TV in New York, will confirm this. They have seen me withstand four prepared lawyers who I did not expect on two hours of TV, overcome and silence them, and they have seen me in competition with the other writers in this field on a show that in the edited tape will run three hours when aired November 12. One of them, in telling me how the show looks after editing, referred to what he dalled my "total recall" of the subject. I tell you this is an exaggeration, but that is how it comes accross.

Please glance at my book, especially the appendix if you are pressed for time. You will find that when I completed my work in mid-February 1965 it was so complete that those who have followed haven't approached its completeness. You will, if you kx know the subject, also see that collectively the others in the field have little if anything not earlier in my book. And I'm now finishing up a sequel, written while I've had the responsibilities of a publisher with a successful book to do. It tells how the whitewash was accomplished - who did it. The title is that. WHITEWASH II: WHO DID IT!

Among the interesting things that has happened is that foreign publishers who more than a year ago would not read the book are now competing for it. For example, I have an agent in England (six would not touch the subject in the US) who tells me that Feltrinelli, who was among those who would not read the book a year ago June and who last month made me an offer I laughed at, has quadrupled his initial offer and is now doing the book.

(Italy)

Should you phone me, we live in the country, sharing each of our lines with seven other parties, including the volunteer fire department, so please make it person-to-person.

When Miss Pelfrage suggested I write you I did not because I have no funds for travel. We haven't ~~taken~~ taken a cent from the gross of the book. As the money comes in 100% goes to the printer. But since then I have learned what I can do entirely by phone. In a way, this is a more exciting format. All I ask is that you let your listeners know my address, which is simply Hyattstown, Md., so that, if their bookstores do not have the book (most in your area do not) these wanting it can get it from me. This is the major problem with a private printing. While wholesalers handle the book, it is their practise to merely accept orders for it. They do no promotion or advertising. So, most bookstores, who can get it under normal trade arrangements, do not know how to. Strangely, this is true despite the considerable news attention the book has gotten in Publishers' Weekly.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg